REMARKS

The Examiner is thanked for the thorough examination of the present application, the allowance of claims 19-37 and 41, and the indication that claims 2-9, 11-18, and 38-40 contain allowable subject matter. In fact, only claims 1 and 10 have been rejected. Reconsideration of this application and claims 1 and 10 are respectfully requested in light of the remarks contained below.

Claim Rejections-35 USC §102 and §103

Claims 1 and 10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as anticipated by or in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Kaneko et al. (US 2001/0020230 A1, hereafter referred to as Kaneko). In particular, the Office Action alleged that, with regard to claims 1 and 10, a maximization of profitability index in Kaneko can be very broadly taken as the claimed prioritize the demand data. Applicants have reviewed the cited reference with care, paying particular attention to the passages cited, and are compelled to respectfully disagree with the Office Action's characterization of the reference. In the interest of expediting the prosecution of this application, Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections made by the Examiner for at least the reasons discussed below.

Claim 1

Claim 1 is directed to a computer-implemented method of classifying demand data for at least one allocation term, comprising inputting the demand data, order data of the allocation term, and supply data and classifying the demand data into prioritized demand data according to the order data and the supply data. Thus, the demand data is first input, then classified and prioritized.

In contrast, Kaneko discloses a demand-production scheme planning apparatus to increase corporate profit. The claimed demand data is not explicitly mentioned in Kaneko. According to steps S100 and S102 in Fig. 6 of Kaneko, stock records and sales schemes are input to the apparatus, but none of them is classified or prioritized. Different values of profitability index are the results of performing different schemes which differ by various order placement distributions (refer to paragraphs 66, 71, and 73 of Kaneko). Different demand-supply schemes are proposed by adjusting order placement in sales steps and producing steps of a scheme, thus to generate different values of profitability index. Even if a profitability index is broadly taken as the means for prioritization, it is for prioritizing order placement distributions. An amount of order for each product placed by each of sales step is initially distributed (refer to paragraph 64 of Kaneko, step S108) and adjusted by (refer to paragraphs 66 and 71 of Kaneko) a CPU (i.e. CPU 42). Thus, order placement distributions are automatically initialized and adjusted by the CPU rather than being input to the apparatus.

Kaneko does not disclose nor teach such demand data which is first input, then classified and prioritized. Order placement can be variously modified to generate various demand-supply schemes associated with an initially input sales scheme to achieve the maximum profitability index. However these generated demand-supply schemes are not the initially input demand data, and the sale scheme has not been classified. Prioritization of the present invention is applied on originally input demand data while profitability index ranking of Kaneko is not.

Referring specifically to claim 1, claim 1 recites:

1.   A computer-implemented method of classifying demand data for at least one allocation term, comprising using a computer to perform the steps of: inputting the demand data, order data of the allocation term, and supply data; and classifying the demand data into *prioritized demand data according to the order data and the supply data*.

(*Emphasis added.*) Claim 1 patently defines over the cited reference for at least the reason that the cited reference fails to teach the features emphasized above.

As such, Kaneko does not disclose nor teach the presently claimed method of classifying demand data for at least one allocation term, comprising inputting the demand data, order data of the allocation term, and supply data and classifying the demand data into prioritized demand data according to the order data and the supply data. There is also no motivation to be found anywhere in Kaneko of attempting to provide such a method.

For at least these reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1 patently defines over Kaneko.

Claim 10

With regard to claim 10, claim 10 is directed to a storage medium for storing a computer program providing a method of classifying demand data for an allocation term, the method comprising the steps of inputting the demand data, order data of the allocation term, and supply data, and classifying the demand data into prioritized demand data according to the order data and the supply data.

Thus, like claim 1, claim 10 (among other features) defines "classifying the demand data into prioritized demand data according to the order data and the supply data." For reasons similar to the reasons discussed above in connection with claim 1, Kaneko does not disclose or teach such a method wherein demand data is first input, then classified and prioritized.

Kaneko did not disclose nor teach the presently claimed storage medium for storing a computer program providing a method of classifying demand data for at least one allocation term, comprising inputting the demand data, order data of the allocation term, and supply data and classifying the demand data into prioritized demand data according to the order data and the supply

data. There is also no motivation to be found any where in Kaneko of attempting to provide such a storage medium.

For at least the reasons stated above, Kaneko does not teach nor suggest all the limitations of independent claims 1 and 10 of the application. Therefore, claims 1 and 10 are allowable over the cited reference. Insofar as claims 2-9, 38, and 39 depend on claim 1, and claims 11-18, and 40 depend on claim 10, these claims are also in condition for allowance.

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner's reconsideration of the application and the timely allowance of claims 1-18 and 38-40.

Conclusion

For at least the foregoing reasons, all pending claims are in condition for allowance, and the Examiner is respectfully requested to pass those claims to issuance. If the Examiner believes a teleconference will expedite the examination of this application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney at 770-933-9500.

No fee is believed to be due in connection with this Amendment and Response to Office Action. If, however, any fee is deemed to be payable, you are hereby authorized to charge any such fee to deposit account 20-0778.

Respectfully submitted,

THOMAS, KAYDEN, HORSTEMEYER & RISLEY, L.L.P.

By: _____

Daniel R. McClure, Reg. No. 38,962

100 Galleria Parkway
Suite 1750
Atlanta, Georgia 30339-5948
(770) 933-9500